

**District Health Will Bring Obesity Epidemic
Into Focus at High School During Public Health Month**

During the past few decades, the prevalence of overweight adults and children has grown to epidemic proportions. Currently, more than 50 percent of the U.S. population is overweight, and approximately 20 percent of them are extremely overweight or obese.

Even more alarming, 25 percent of children and adolescents are overweight. Excess weight in childhood and adolescence has been found to predict being overweight as an adult, according to the American Obesity Association (AOA). Children with obesity, age 10 to 13, are reported to have a 70 percent likelihood of obesity persisting into adult years.

To bring this growing problem into focus for youth, South Central District Health will be conducting an epidemiological study with Twin Falls High School students during Public Health Month in April. Maggi Machala, MPH, RN, SCDH Director of Community Health, and Wendi Lane, MPH, SCDH Epidemiologist, will lead members of Mr. Reynolds' Health Occupations class through a study to determine some of the causes of childhood obesity and how it might be prevented.

The teaching demonstration will be a great opportunity for photos or video of students actually participating in an epidemiological study. District Health staff will be working with the classes on Tuesday, April 6, and Thursday, April 8, from 1 – 1:50 p.m. each day. The April 8 session may provide better photo opportunities. If you would like to film or photograph these classes, please call Monie Smith at South Central District Health, 734-5900, ext. 278, or Linda Baird at the Twin Falls School District, 733-6900.

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